

Division of Extension Information

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS
RESULTING FROM THE 1947 EXTENSION EDITOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May 1948

I - General

Recommendations

Information Studies

Recommended that future information studies be done on a coordinated basis in the field. State surveys, studies, and research in methods should be coordinated and should have some degree of uniformity.

Much remains to be done in the matter of readability of bulletins and publications, in radio listening habits, and in related fields in which State extension editors are vitally interested. Contrasting situations should be surveyed in States to determine the most desirable means of disseminating information.

Actions

Radio Studies

The need for comparable data on radio studies in different States is very important. Thus far each State has wanted to make its own study in its own way to fit the conditions in the State.

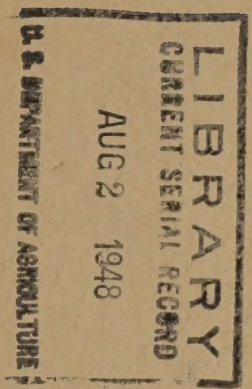
There are different general types of extension radio programs. In evaluating a program it would be helpful to know the type and give the purpose of the program so the reader could relate the study to other studies or to his type of program.

Readability Studies

Comparable data is available in the readability studies in the sense that the same formula is used in the analysis of all bulletins

Publication Studies

The Arizona 4-H Bulletins study is the only study of the use of bulletins that the Division has made in the past year, whereby information has been collected for members and leaders. Simplified reports of the two 4-H studies in the northeast were published cooperatively through arrangements with the National Committee. The two studies were planned and conducted jointly by those States participating, with the same question form used in both States.



Recommendations

Actions

Good examples are: "Parents and 4-H Club Work" from a study made in Mass., Maine, N. H., and Ohio, and "Keeping High School Youth in 4-H Clubs."

A cooperative bulletin pertaining to 4-H health programs in Ill., Ind., Mich., and Ohio was suggested at the 16th Annual Interstate 4-H Club Conference and is now under consideration.

Simplifying Economic Information

Because all general media of communication--radio, press, publications--are being used increasingly to interpret agricultural economics, the need for presenting economic outlook subject matter so that it will be clearly understood is obvious. Analysis of some 60 pieces of recent Extension outlook material showed only 3 percent easy to read and popularly understandable. It is recommended that economists attending annual outlook conferences be instructed in methods of presenting economic information.

The increased interest in improved outlook statements is not easy to measure. It was not featured at the agricultural sessions of last year's outlook conferences. The time available for the consideration of methods is limited and the men have usually requested that other things be discussed. Based on the impressions of those on the Federal staff with whom I have talked, the regional workshops now provide a much better place to go into this subject than the annual outlook conference.

Mrs. Cowing reports that several State economists have sent outlook reports in for readability analysis. She mentions Stucky, Mont.; Cagle, Wash.; Kennedy, Idaho; Norton, Ill. She also mentioned that the editors from Iowa, New York, Kansas, and Alabama have been sending in considerable economic material for analysis during the past year. The interest of several of the above can be traced to the workshops that have been held.

Among samples listed which show improvement are: Looking Ahead with Montana Farmers and Ranchers, Mont.; 1948 Agricultural Outlook, Minn.; Farm Outlook Information South Carolina-1948, S. C.; Farmer's Stake in Price Control, W. Va.; 1948

Recommendations

Actions

New York Agricultural Outlook, N. Y.;
Economic Information for Wisconsin Farmers, Wisc.;
Some Findings from Studies of Farm and Home
Radio Programs, USDA.

Gertrude Power of our Division demonstrated
the making of simple, effective charts
carrying economic information at the
last Outlook conference.

II - Combined Operations

Recommendation

Action

Better Services to Editors Means Better Service on National Information.

That the State extension editors will welcome any opportunity which will enable them to be of further service to USDA and the State landgrant colleges on one hand and to the farm people on the other. It is suggested that in the case of the USDA:

(a) Lengthy reports and statements routed to State extension editors should be summarized or abstracted. Such briefs are more likely to be accurate if prepared by the originating agency.

(b) An appraisal of the material now going to State extension editors is needed.

(c) Extension editors should receive copies of all subject-matter materials pertinent to a comprehensive information program.

Soon after the Advisory Committee meeting the BAE started the Agricultural Outlook Digest, a monthly two-page summary. It goes to Extension editors. The BAE is also providing us for use in Director Wilson's weekly letter to Extension Directors a summary of the BAE report that will be issued during the next week or 10 days. All Department press releases, talks by the Secretary etc. are summarized, issued by the Office of Information in the Daily Digest. This daily summary is sent to extension editors who want it, but since they get a copy of each story pertinent to their region, which is in effect a summary, we wonder if they want the daily summary also.

This we have to do constantly and a list of the material going automatically and regularly to extension editors is in the kit of material for this year's advisory committee members.

The principle is established, if we miss in deciding what is pertinent we hope the editors will write us about needed materials.

II - Combined Operations Continued

Recommendation

(d) The question of sending copies of PMA materials direct to State extension editors should be again reviewed.

(e) The practice of putting State extension editors on any existing priority mailing lists for materials will make much of the USDA information more valuable and timely.

Action

: There's been no real change of policy in releasing
: PMA information through extension; PMA here is
: going on the basis that material in each State and
: from each regional information office is handled in
: line with agreement between the State extension and
: the PMA office.

: News stories from the Office of Information are
: mailed direct from the Office of Information just
: as they are mailed to press, often by a night crew
: mailing late afternoon stories. Some of the BAE
: crop and special reports are probably the only other
: type of material that might need regular fast handling
: to editors. The BAE in a few cases is sending
: "hot copies" airmail to extension editors and will
: be glad to give such service on specific reports to
: extension editors requesting it.

III Visual Aids

Recommendation

Entire field of visual aids, including photographs, posters, exhibits, window displays, and demonstration material as well as motion pictures and picture slides; needs to be explored. All should be included in a balanced program.

Action

We have advocated using all media, an example being our stressing all types at the Outlook conference last fall and again with the seminar for missionaries this spring. Do not know extent States have explored entire field but do know that cooperative extension's top flight visual specialists, generally speaking are working in one visual medium only. They do not have personnel or time to do production work in all media. Do not know extent to which they encourage their county agents to develop materials in different media.

Largest need in the visual field is for more adequate training of personnel in proper use of visual aids. Training schools or workshops should be developed on a State or area basis. Should include training in production and also in how to use.

Visual aids should be used primarily as educational media and not merely for entertainment. Motion picture production of USDA should be maintained, with more attention paid to subject-matter field and less to promotional material.

There is a growing problem in need for more prints of motion pictures. Will increase over next few years. States should establish budgets for purchase of additional prints of both USDA and commercially produced films.

Graham Coulter, when visual specialist with Virginia extension service, conducted several schools in his State last year. Four visual schools were held in Ohio and six in Montana, last year, by visual specialist of this office.

This has been stressed repeatedly in conferences.

State extension action remains important. Due to the drastic curtailment of the Dept's funds for motion picture activity, fewer prints have been released to State extension services this year.

III Visual Aids Continued

Recommendation

USDA should establish a service for the review and evaluation of new films in agricultural and home economics fields, and report to the States.

Slidefilm exchanges. An exchange system, whereby copies of slides in one State could be obtained by another, should be developed.

USDA Exhibits Service should provide lists of its material and instruction on techniques of preparing local exhibits. Should prepare and make available general exhibit material which could be adapted to local conditions.

Visual Aids Section should offer practical assistance and advice on establishing and operating visual programs in the States. Should include an exchange of information between States.

Action

While no official committee has been set up to review films, the weekly letter to extension editors, the weekly letter to extension directors, visualizing, and the newsletter of the Motion Picture Service, all carry reviews of new films.

Nothing has been done during the past year in setting up slide exchanges among State extension services, so far as we know.

Law under which Exhibits Service operates provides only for preparation of exhibits at national, international, and State fairs. Publication, "Educational Exhibits, How to prepare and Use Them", by H. W. Gilbertson, recently released. Sent to State extension services in quantity.

Assistance of this character has been given continuously request through correspondence and personal interviews.

IV Publications

Recommendation

Inform States if Limitations Imposed

That State extension services be informed as promptly as possible of the exact nature of any publication limitations imposed.

Action

No publications limitations have been imposed. However, the demand from State Extension Services for USDA publications has in many cases exceeded the supply available free of charge. The States, especially the State publications distribution officers have been kept informed of the issuance of new USDA publications and the quantities available free of charge.

Free Bulletin Distribution Urged

That attention of State extension administrators be called to the crippling effect on the educational functions of the Extension Service of curtailed USDA bulletin distribution. Steps should be taken to encourage continuance of free bulletin distribution.

Some information on the lessened availability of USDA publications have gone to State Extension directors. State publications distribution officers have been kept informed of the situation and State extension editors have also been kept informed. Probably most State and county extension workers who are concerned with using USDA publications realize that in many cases these publications have been in limited free supply.

The USDA's practical problem of using limited printing funds to meet increased printing costs and publish a backlog of war-accumulated manuscripts, had been recognized. The importance of continuing free distribution of publications for use in extension work has been stressed with the Budget Bureau, the Office of Information, and the various USDA bureaus.

IV Publications Continued

Recommendation

Advance Cash Payments Impractical

That if it becomes necessary to purchase USDA publications for Extension Service distribution, satisfactory arrangements be made with land-grant colleges and the Superintendent of Documents to permit acceptance of State purchase orders and delivery of publications ordered prior to payment. This recommendation is made because the Superintendent of Documents now requires cash payment in advance of shipment, a requirement which is not workable under many States' purchasing procedures.

Cooperative State Publications

That States in similar areas continue to develop a cooperative approach to publication problems, by planning, preparing, and publishing joint publications. Further, that States cooperate by sale of their bulletins to other States, especially where such arrangement can be made in advance. The Division of Extension Information should continue to be effective in accomplishing this coordination among regions, and nationally, when that appears practical.

Action

: Efforts have continued in order to get the
: Superintendent of Documents to honor purchase
: orders for publications from State Extension
: Services and Land-Grant Colleges and accept
: payment after receipt of the publications.
: However, the requirement of the Superintendent
: of Documents for cash payments from land-grant
: colleges in advance from land-grant colleges
: remains unchanged.

: The Northeastern States and especially the New
: England States have continued to cooperate in
: planning, preparing and issuing extension publi-
: cations. A number of States are expected to
: cooperate with New York in printing a bulletin
: on the use of color in the home. Several nearby
: States cooperated with Arkansas in the printing
: of a leaflet on egg grades. The midwestern States
: cooperated in issuing a land-use bulletin. There
: is interest in interstate publications among the
: southern extension directors. Extension agricul-
: tural engineers in the Northeast have decided to
: cooperate in preparing some publications. Exten-
: sion foresters in the same region are interested
: in cooperation in issuing a bulletin. State 4-H
: Club leaders in the West made plans for several
: interstate publications. A number of State pur-
: chased copies of a New England cooperative 4-H
: bulletin reporting on a 4-H survey. A number of

IV Publications Continued

Recommendation

Action

States also purchased copies of another 4-H survey report. These two publications were developed by the Federal Extension Service. The Federal Office has been active in encouraging and assisting in interstate publications cooperation.

In spite of what has been done in this field, the possibilities of interstate cooperation in putting out publications are still largely to be explored and worked out. Perhaps the best opportunities lie in integrating such cooperation with other phases of interstate cooperation in Extension planning and work.

V - Newspapers and Magazines

Recommendations

Weekly News Service

The Committee recommends greater regularity in the USDA "Weekly News Service" with particular reference to exclusive stories sent to the State extension editor's office

Service to Magazines

State extension editors can materially aid the magazine service by sending the Division of Extension Information tips etc. for feature articles.

Trade Papers and House Organs

Among media which merit further attention are trade papers and house organs.

Extension Service Review

The DEI should continue its survey of the objectives and ways of making the Review more effective. * * * The prime element is the subject matter. To increase the subject-matter appeal, more and shorter stories would help in broadening the base of reader interest.

Action

Report on action included in a separate item enclosed in the kit mailed committee members.

To encourage editors to send more ideas and tips, as recommended, the weekly letter to extension editors was utilized to report on contacts with magazines.

A start has been made in developing a mailing list to include trade papers and house organs that have circulations interested in Extension Service objectives. Since the field is so broad and the funds and personnel so limited, it might be useful to discuss just what groups we particularly want to reach and what message we want to get across to them.

A readership survey has been undertaken for this month (May), using the April-May issue. Eighteen extension editors are cooperating. 134 county extension agents, chosen at random, are to be questioned.

Newspapers and magazines - continued

An advisory committee from the Federal staff has been working with the editors for past six months. After results of survey are available, committee will evaluate the magazine and make recommendations which we hope will help us to improve the REVIEW and lay the foundation for more support from all extension workers. As stated in last year's report, the bulk of the material must be supplied by extension editors. To keep the Review before them, Associate Editor Dorothy Bigelow attended the 1947 ACE meeting. A report of the year's activities was made and interesting contributions frequently mentioned in the weekly letter to extension editors. The objective of more and shorter stories has been kept in mind constantly.

VI - Radio

Recommendation

(1) State-Owned Stations.

Further study should be made of the needs and possibilities of establishing State-owned and operated radio stations (both standard and FM). This study should take into consideration abilities of States to finance adequately educational broadcasting of high enough quality to command attention of the listening audience.

(2) Farm Flash Service.

Radio Service should continue its Farm Flash service to extension editors. In event of need of curtailment, this should be one of the last services eliminated.

(3) Radio Service on Homemaking.

The Radio Service should immediately undertake to improve its service to editors in the field of homemaking. At present, there is little, if any, service in homemaking available.

Action

No further study has been made of the needs and possibilities of establishing State-owned and operated radio stations (both standard and FM).

The Farm Flash Service has been continued, and a check was made on how it is used. Replies came from roughly over 35 States out of the 48.

The Radio Service was unable, due to curtailment of budget, to establish or re-establish a homemaking service. However, arrangements were made to make available the Department's Food and Home Notes to both Extension home demonstration agents and women broadcasters at stations. The Extension Service handles the former in bulk, and the Radio Service mails out the latter. We have hopes but very slim hopes, that within the next year, we can re-establish a homemaking radio news letter or other service.

Radio - Continued

Recommendation

(4) RFD.

Greater cooperation between extension editors and radio farm directors is desirable. In some States, there is lack of cooperation between radio farm directors and extension editors. This needs to be corrected.

Action

During the past year the Radio Service has had a definite program to increase the cooperation between Extension Editors and Radio Farm Directors. The progress is indicated by the following: Radio Farm Directors are being invited to attend more Regional AAACE gatherings and, on the other hand, more Farm Directors are taking greater individual and group interest in Extension editorial meetings. More Farm Directors are attending more Land Grant College meetings planned for broadcasters. The National Association of Radio Farm Directors has asked an Extension Radio Editor (Meynard Speeco) to act as Chairman of its Extension-RFD Relationship Committee. During the winter the new NARFD's President appointed an Extension-NARFD Relationship Committee. At the last NARFD annual meeting in late November and early December of 1947 and at other opportunities, members of the Radio Service have been told of working relationships between RFD's and Extension editorial officers that indicate much closer working relationships than before. During the past year a survey conducted by Radio Service and DEI resulted in a definite indication that Radio Farm Directors are being given a great deal more consideration in State Extension releases. At the same time, a greater percentage of new stations than during the previous year have indicated that they have already gotten in touch with county agents and State Extension editors.

Radio - Continued

Recommendation

(5) Radio House Organ.

The U.S.D.A. should reestablish its ("Hook-Up") house organ on radio. This should be aimed directly at helping county extension agents with broadcasting problems. It should be distributed through State extension editors in keeping with a decentralized informational program.

(6) Radio Policy.

Action should be taken by the Federal Extension Service to submit a proposed radio policy statement to the Committee on Extension Organization and Policy for consideration. State extension services should be consulted with reference to such a proposed policy.

(7) Training in Radio.

Continued emphasis upon radio training is desirable, particularly among county extension agents. This means also emphasis upon training beyond the preliminary steps in broadcasting. Greater use of radio by county extension agents is strongly endorsed.

Action

USDA has not yet reestablished its house organ on radio. However, personnel and responsibilities are beginning to check down, and I believe that we will be able to reestablish this on an intermittent basis before long. One additional reason for not getting it done was finding the money to pay for it, either in Extension or Radio Service.

Little or nothing has been done on this during the year.

Training in radio, especially for county Extension workers has continued. This project was on a very precarious footing due to reasons other than our desire. Although we have not been able to continue radio training schools on as extensive a basis as we wished, we did do a considerable number. Some training was carried on at the expense of activities in the main office. Probably radio training has never occupied as important a place in the minds of the Department as it does at present.

